LITERARY EXAMINER.

From the Home Journal.

Life is a Dream I Cherish.

BY SINGING SYBIL.

Youthful hearts will seek romances—
Youthful hearts will have their fancies;
And there is a dream I cherish
That is with me all the day,
Of a grand, old tree that springeth,
Where its waving foliage flingeth
A soft shadow on the casement,
Where I muse the hours away—
A soft shadow, weary never
Of its light and shifting play.

This I dream—an angel spirit
Is forever hovering near it,
And within it and above it,
With a mission from the sky!
For the old tree seems to love me,
As it waves its boughs above me
With a faint and gentle murmur,
Or a low and saddened sigh—
For it seems to guard and cherish
Even the wayward dreamer—I!

There's a whisper and a blessing
In the beautiful caressing
Of the leaves that stoop to kiss me
As I lean upon the sill;
And their murmur makes a feeling
That on earth hath no revealing,
But that sleepeth in my bosom
Mute, and eloquent, and still,
And their touch upon my forehead
Wakes a strangely pleasant thrill.

Where the topmost boughs are swinging
And the waving leaves are singing,
One low song of love forever
To the azure up on high,
Does my soul delight to hover,
With the cool leaves for a cover,
Looking up into the sky!—
With a motion soft as music
Swinging in the tree-top high!

Oh! how blessed is my wild spirit,
When no earthly thought is near it,
As it lies 'mid dreams and visions
In the arms of the old tree!
All the whispering leaflets bless it,
And the wild wind doth caress it,
And the soft and dreamy azure
Can my spirit only see,
And that seems to grow and deepen
Into strange infinity.

But there is a solemn hour
When the tree hath wilder power—
In the deep and starry midnight,
When I sit and watched the sky—
When the foliage moans and shivers
And the starlight o'er it quivers,
And the shadows creep and tremble
O'er the casement where they lie—
Then the shadow and the whisper
Thrill my soul with mystery!

When the summer-day is breaking,
And the earth is slowly waking—
When I throw the shutter open
To the morning fresh and fair,
Then the spray doth bend before me,
Dashing shining dew-drops o'er me,
While the little leaves a-laughing,
Clap their hands in the bright air,
As the perfumed shower of jewels
Sparkles in my unbound hair.

Oh! I know no monarch olden
Wore a crown so brightly golden
Nor a robe as richly crimson
As the tree that loves me, wore,
When the air was bright and dreaming,
And the heavens were blue and gleaming
In the glorious days of Autumn,
That are now, alas! no more.
Then its murmur grew so mournful
As the sunny hours past o'er.

Therefore, as my wayward spirit
Is forever blessed when near it—
As it seems to know and love me,
And is so beloved by me—
As its every whisper thrills me,
And its midnight shadow fills me
With a thought of mystery—
Do I think some angel mission,
Hovers ever in that tree!

The Bride of the Fiord.

CHAPTER I.

Old Norway, crowned in snow, and embraced in ocean's waters, begirt with rock and mountain, with her forests of pine and her living lakes—the primitive habits of her people, their industry, and their national enthusiasm, is, indeed a remarkable land. As remarkable to-day in her character, as she was a thousand years ago; when her sea-kings were upon the coasts of many European lands, giving laws and customs to the civilised nations, who now look down upon modern Norway, and forget, or are ignorant, of the past. But if scenery or national habits stamp noble peculiarities upon the land and its people, still more should that people's warm-heartedness make them objects of European interest. A warm-heartedness which, whether it displays itself in deep national love of "Fader-land," in generous hospitality to the stranger, or in the relations of man to man and to society, of husband, wife, and child, is in its intensity and truthfulness markedly illustrative of an uncorrupted people. Somewhat of this is conveyed in the true story of Olaf and Margaret.

It was summer on the Fiord, whose waters slept without a ripple, as the clear surface reflected back the shadows of the abrupt rocks, upon whose summits grew lofty pines, and within whose clefts the wall-flower, and the red and yellow cloud-berries, contrasted their gaudy colors, with, here and there, a lily of the valley, rearing its modest head through scanty grass and green moss. So narrow was the inlet for its waters, that the Fiord might have seemed a closed lake; and so surrounded was it by its lofty and rocky boundaries, that no light fell upon its surface, save that which shot down vertically from a cloudless sky. Far beyond those arose mountain piled on mountain, until they blended with the heavens; and their tops, capped with the unmolten snow of centuries, contrasted their silvery whiteness with the black rocks and dark trees which surrounded that glassy Fiord. Above it, and opposite to those mountains, wound one of those precipitous roads over which it is impossible for horse or machine to travel, save when the Norwegian snow fills up all chasms, and strong ice, from cleft to cleft, makes winter bridges over which the sledge is then drawn, with a security marvellous to such as could have seen its irregular summer surface and gaping chasms, down whose sides nought save the fox, the squirrel, or the hare, could be expected to find footing. Yet at the lower end, through an opening between two rocks, the waters passed out into a wider space, and onward, until miles below that Fiord arose a little village, of some dozen farm houses and a plain white church. Here, on that Fiord, the village found its fishing, and its inhabitants were sustained principally from its waters, together with such game as the Fjelde beyond its rocky boundaries afforded.

It was yet morn, and no boat was out; nothing disturbed the perfect stillness of the hour, except the screech of some alarmed sea-bird, as the fox or the wolf neared its dwelling. One human being only was visible in its neighborhood; and she, with a light and agile foot, yet with cautious steps, wound her away along that boundary road—now up amid the topmost pines, now down the side of some declivitous rock, now along the moss bank at its foot, and up again; now in sight and now obscured from view by some projecting eminence. Her figure was light and graceful, and her dress picturesque in the extreme. Upon her head she wore a cap of blue and scarlet cloth; fastened in upon her temples with a golden band. A dress of reindeer skin, closed in at the waist by a worsted sash, fell to her knees, and beneath it her limbs were clad in a lighter skin which fitted close as stockings, and covered the feet as shoes; while her neck was covered with a red wrapper, fastened in a neat tie beneath her chin.—Her dress alone bespoke her not of Norwegian blood; and the remarkable characters of her exquisitely-delicate shape, her dark brown eyes, sloping somewhat to the temples, her black hair and sallow skin, stamped her one of the Lapland race.—She was of that outcast blood. Her tribe was sure to be near at hand—their tents cast in some neighboring Fjelde, where were grazing their troops of reindeer.—Every foot of that way seemed known to her; she must have trod it so often before. Does she seek flower or fruit? No; she looks to neither. Journeys she to the village? No; for now she stops, and seating herself upon the bank, close to the water's edge, she seems to await in silence the object of her mission. From her bosom she has pulled forth a pair of fur mittens, looked at them with pleased earnestness; then glanced hastily along the waters in the direction of the cleft leading to the village, and with a listening but a disappointed expression of face, she has replaced them in her dress again. There until the noonday she sat statue-like and motionless, except that at intervals her head inclined in a listening attitude, as though she watched for some oar upon the water. At length a look of pleasure beamed over her dark features, and her head and ears became fixedly attentive to some coming sound. It was a boat, approaching from the village; its oars splashed steadily but gently in the water, worked by a female's hands, who sat alone within it. Again the Laplander's countenance relaxed into its passive sadness, and expressed disappointment. She made a first motion, as though she would retire; and then hesitatingly resumed her seat.—Presently the boat neared her, and she had a closer view of its inmate. A sweet looking girl, upon whose regular features twenty summers had told their time, and almost ripened into glorious womanhood a thing of angel beauty; her soft blue eyes, from the midst of light flaxen hair, that curled naturally over her temples, looked laughingly upon everything; and her well-developed frame, full, yet graceful, with every move of the oars was moulded into fresh outlines of loveliness. A glance at her could tell that her heart was a happy home, and the music of peace it breathed was on her countenance. It was Margaret, the betrothed of Olaf, and she was out in her light skiff upon the waters to meet him, to whom her heart was pledged. She looked not for the Laplander—the Laplander looked not for her—but their eyes met, and Margaret's boat was speedily at the bank, where that young Laplander sat musing. And Margaret addressed her—

'Ho! are your tribe near the Fiord?—Have you any furs to sell?'

'None to sell,' was the calm reply, distinctly spoken in passable Norse.

'Then what do you at the Fiord, and alone, unless you came to sell or buy? If on your way to the village, I will row you there in my boat.'

The Laplander looked up, and the tears were in her eyes. In Norway there is a superstition against sitting with a Laplander, whose outcast tribe are at once despised as inferior, and dreaded as supernatural.—The Laplander knew and felt all this, and the unexpected and kindly offer touched upon her heart. She expressed her thankfulness, and shook her head as she looked up into the sunny face of her who, standing in her boat, looked down upon that "poor Fin"* with an expression of touching, but warm sadness as though she grieved for the outcast fate of her race.

'I have nothing to sell,' said the "Fin," 'and I want to buy nothing.' Then, after a pause—'I have not been here for two years; my tribe has been up far north, and now, when on their way to Drontheim, I ventured to this Fiord with these gloves,' said she, drawing them from her bosom, 'which I have made for one to whom I owe the rescue of my life, even from the water, two years ago.'

Pleasure again lit up the young Norwegian's countenance, as she exclaimed—

'Oh, I know it, I know it all; you are the young Laplander, who fell from yonder rock, and whom noble Olaf plunged into the waters for, and saved.'

Warmly and passionately the young Fin exclaimed 'I am, I am;' and her dark eyes lit up, and the flush of gratitude came in warm red blood upon her sombre features.

Two years before, in clambering over these rocks her skin shoes had slipped upon a shelving bank, from whose edge she was precipitated into the waters beneath. Olaf, a bold young waterman, living near the Fiord, and who happened to have been then, from his boat, casting his fishing-net upon the waters, saw her fall, and with the instinctive courage of true manhood, aided by his skill in swimming, as a child of the water, he rescued her. In his boat she came to consciousness, as his manly form knelt over her, and from his corn-spirit flask he poured upon her temples and applied to her lips, the rude stimulant and restorative of his country. She recovered, with that intense sense of gratitude which such an event was sure to beget. She looked up into his open and gallant features, as though some genius of the spot, above the measure of humanity, had been her deliverer. And she, the poor Lapland girl, an outcast from Norwegian homes—one with whom the sons of old Norway would neither sit nor eat—was there tended by a Norseman, to whom she was debtor for her life. It has been somewhat beautifully said, "We plant a rose, and then we water it because we planted it." Olaf felt the influence of some such feeling; he would fain have carried home the gentle and subdued being he had rescued; but the superstitions of his country were strong upon him, and as soon as he felt she was sufficiently restored to leave his boat, he raised her in his arms, and laid her upon that very bank where she now sat. Thence he helped her along the rude footings of the rocky path, and as she indicated the direction of her tribe, he led her to the Fjelde, where her people, with their flocks and tents, had gathered. There, left in security, he parted from her, scarcely returning the warm and passionate hand-grasp she bestowed upon him, and kneeling at his feet, she prayed her earnestly honest thankfulness to him and "Nipen"† for her deliverance.

'Pray to Nipen,' said he, 'to guard me on the Fiord—'tis all I ask.'

And the poor Fin prayed, and warmly prayed.

They met to know each other no more; but his image, and the thought of him, and the warm prayer to Nipen for him, for her brief life, filled the heart and soul of that young Fin. She and her tribe passed far north; but wherever they struck their tents—wherever she led her aged sightless mother, victim of the Lapland blindness,‡ there her mental vision carried Olaf. Her filial duties of guiding and caring for that feeble parent, her duties to her tribe, her needlework, which she plied dexterously, were still pursued as constantly as before; but the Lappish song no longer kept time with her employment; her gaiety was gone. She no longer sat before her tent, surrounded by the youth of her tribe, listening to the music of her gentle voice, or delighting in her tales of tent-scenes and olden Lapland times, and reindeer adventures, and stories of the Fiord demon and the Nipen vengeance. The poor Laps shook their heads, and marvelled what had fallen upon "Una." Her whole character was changed. One all-absorbing thought filled her mind. 'Olaf, her savior!—should she ever meet him again?' What could she do to show him the depth of her gratitude for that kindness from the hands of one of his race?' Still it never suggested itself to Una's simple nature, that this feeling of gratitude was gradually extending itseif into a deeper passion. For two whole years, while with her tribe, she had gone north, and now south again, back to the old well-remembered encampment, her thoughts had been upon that man and that hour. At her blind mother's knee she had wrought those gloves of the loveliest skin she could procure, and fastened with such needlework as never Fin-girl had given to skin before, and made to fit him—'Oh! she knew they would fit him!' Poor innocent!—and yet she knew not it was love. And now upon the first morning she had reached that Fiord, she was down upon it, and there, upon the well-remembered bank, she had placed herself, patiently to await the fishing hour that would bring the object of her mission upon those waters. And who was the Norwegian girl with whom she now conversed?

Margaret Franz was the pride of the village by that Fiord. She was the daughter of the farmer or landowner, who held all those lands stretching up from its boundaries to the mountain foot. Every one liked Margaret Franz. She was so good, and then there was so much of that goodness shining out of her open features. And all the young men liked her, she was so beautiful and so gay—so cheerful at their feasts, so free from guile; she sang so sweetly, she danced so well, and she was so kind to all. Alas, poor Fin!—and Olaf loved her warmly and wildly as ever man loved a woman; and Olaf had won return love. And ere the winter set in, Olaf and Margaret were to be wed together, and he was to live with her upon her father's land, and everything was settled and the day named; and Olaf had gone down to Drontheim, to lay in the necessary stores for a wedding, and a winter home in Norway.

All this, with the open frankness of her nature and her nation, Margaret Franz told to the poor Fin. She told it, partly because every one knew it, and partly because she thought that the grateful Lapland girl would be glad to hear that Olaf was about to be happy; she told it, because she felt proud to have a listener who knew that Olaf was good, and Olaf was brave; she told it, because her heart was full of joy, and she thought that every one must participate in that joy; and sure the outcast Fin, who owed her life to him, must rejoice in it too!

Now, for the first time, that poor Lapland girl felt the truth. She knew not till now she loved; but now!—she felt it in the envy of Margaret which sprang up in her bosom at that moment. She felt it in the hot tears which rolled down her cheek, as she stooped to pluck the flowers that lay at her feet, to hide her bitter secret. She felt it in the heart-sinking which made her wish she was beneath those waters again, and no Olaf near to rescue her. But to hear and suffer was the destiny of her race, and she knew it, and she must endure it. Still it came so suddenly upon her, though she knew she durst never hope that Norway Olaf would wed Lapland Una, she never thought of it at all till now; and now it was all, all upon her; now she understood herself—she knew it all. Slowly, as the tears dried off, she raised her head, and looking into the sunny and happy face before her, said—

'And he cannot be back to-day?'

'No;' was Margaret's reply; 'as he has not been here before this hour, he comes not till to-morrow.'

'Then you will give him,' said the Fin, and her measured words were scarcely audible—'you will give the present I have made for him;' and she placed the gloves in Margaret's hands. 'Tell him, the Lapland girl he saved made them for him! Tell him she never forgot to pray, and give cakes to Nipen, § as Norway men do, that he might be good to Olaf. Tell him,' said she, and her bosom swelled as she spoke, 'that if you do make him happy—and oh, you will—that it was Una's prayers to Nipen that got you for him.' And the hot tears rolled down again, but she brushed them aside, and rushing up the declivity, was speedily out of sight.

Margaret looked after her—she was puzzled what to think. She never dreamed of an outcast Fin loving Olaf. And then these Fins were so wild; they partook so much of the preternatural; their manners were so strange, that Margaret thought no more of it, save that she stored up the grateful creature's gloves in her own bosom for Olaf, and casting her light oars into the water, she was again afloat on her business up the Fiord.

CHAPTER II.

At length Olaf has returned from Drontheim. All his preparations have been completed, and Saturday's first feast is over, ‖ and the Sabbath morn has opened with its glorious light, and the waters are calm, the trees green, and the boats are all assembled, that are to carry that bridal party to the parish church. And the waters are smooth, as is to be the life of that young bride and bridegroom. Now the oars strike into the water, and the three boats are off from the bank. The first carries Margaret and her female friends and relatives; and they are dressed in gay attire; and Margaret is all in white; and upon her head she wears a gilt crown, the Norwegian emblem of a virgin bride. Her eyes are laughing, and gay eyes are answering their meaning looks. At the head of that first boat sit two youths with pan-pipes, playing their sweetest music; all arms have laid down their oars to listen to that music; a light sail has been unfurled to catch the favoring breeze, and all are happy there—happy as though life had no ills in the future.

Within the second boat sits Olaf; he handles no oar now; and around him sit his friends and relatives; and some of them carry fiddles, and some carry the rifle, wherewith the Norway peasant is found to be expert in killing wolves and cock; and the third boat carries more friends, and one of them carries a drum; and around them are piled the wedding presents of numerous friends, making a store of winter food and clothing—the kegs of spiced meat puddings, the dried fish, the frozen venison, the cock of the north, the ptarmigan, the hare, the cloaks and shawls of fur, the cloth, woven in domestic looms, and the various articles of furniture; and nearly all are gifts to the loving Olaf and Margaret—the food from the hands of fair kinswomen—the clothes and furniture wrought by the skill of brother peasants and brother boatmen. How beautifully illustrative of the generous and simple habits of this natural people! And as the boats move onward for the Church, now the pandean-pipe pours out its music, and woman's voice goes with it, and then the drum pours out its louder joy, and presently the music ceases, and the rifles are discharged along the water, and the distant echoes reiterate their discharge, again and again. And these rough men, with their large slouched hats, and tightened jerkins, and long knives, stuck in at their waists, and reaching down to their large water boots, are all joyous, too, and they sing in loud and spirited chorus their national anthem of "For Norge;" and then, as its chorus dies upon the waters, the rifles are again discharged. There, too, is an old Norseman, whose age precludes his singing, but who is venerable in his knowledge of the historic records of his country—who, wending back into primitive times, can recount the Saga, ¶ which he now recites with the energy of younger days—the Saga of many a noble 'sea king,' who carried war and conquest down into England, and off far south—who gave Norway laws, and made her name ring, a thing of terror, upon southern ears. How intently that national people regard his historic tales, and thank their aged historian when he ends! And then the flasks of corn-whiskey, and the fiery potato-spirit, and the birch-tree wine, are handed round, and the toast of 'Gamle Norge' ** is drunk with an enthusiasm becoming the sons of that mountain, snow-clad land. Oh, it is a happy scene!—and when a pause comes in their joyous music, the tinkling of bells can be heard upon these waters, from the village church, where the clergyman awaits their coming.

Nearer and nearer they make for that village; and already Margaret's boat, lightest made and lightest filled, strikes ahead of the others, and bids fair to win in this bridal race to reach the church. And now the rough jest is thrown by his male companions to Olaf—

'His bride and her bright crown are fleeing from him.'

'His lazy boat had best pull hard, or she will be at the church and wed to his rival before he can reach her.'

And Olaf looks serious, not because his honest nature disrelishes the joke, but his seaman's knowledge has looked a-head, and that pinewood forest, and the gathering shadows portend that ere the evening closes, the storm-demon may screech over those calm waters. He shouts to Margaret's boat to have her sail lowered, and to work with their oars. But that boat is too far a-head to hear, or else the laughter and music aboard of it drowns Olaf's voice, which blends and dies away with the surrounding echoes. His comrades have lowered their sails, and pull their oars lustily to gain upon the maiden's boat, and still the jest goes round; but Olaf does not heed it; his whole attention seems fastened upon that cloud, and that treasure-freighted boat, which still skims those waters like a spirit of living beauty. It may be but the fears of an anxious bridegroom; but Olaf has lived upon these waters, and tossed upon them in many a storm, and from his boyhood has been schooled to see it coming, to prepare for it, and to fight it; and his friends grow serious as they mark the anxiety depicted upon his face. A wild anxiety—and now, without a word from the foremost rower, he has seized the oars, and pulls with an energy and force that he alone is capable of.

'Aye, there goes Olaf—none but he could do that,' cries many a voice.

He shouts again, and vainly shouts, while the crimsoned blood distends his features, and the veins are swollen like cords in his sinewy arms, as, with renewed efforts, he seeks to reach that fated boat.

A few heavy drops patter upon the water, a low, murmuring sound, now swelling louder, gains upon the ear. Olaf has cast down his oars; he leans from the head of the boat; his whole strength seems gathered into one wild shout—a shout of fearful energy. That shout is heard. Margaret has heard it, and turns to look upon him. The sailor-boys fly to furl the sail; but, oh! it is all too late. Olaf has looked his last on Margaret. He caught the last glance of her sunny eyes. From that opening in the side-rocks, as from the mouth of a cannon, the storm-cloud has burst upon the waters, and burst at the moment the boat was beneath its power; the storm had fastened upon its sail, and with the rapidity of the lightning-flash, the boat was cast upon its side, and with its inmates went down forever from the surface of that Fiord! One short cry—a feeble and a startled cry—from that sinking boat, and then the heavy splash, and the waters were for a moment troubled, then rippled in circling eddies around the grave of the bride of the Fiord!

It went down full of life and beauty, full of joy and hope—hope that was pressing into future times, and carrying happy years. And this is life! Alas! the uncertain life—the dreamy thing of blasted wishes and drowned hopes, to which we all so fondly cling.

Olaf made no plunge into the water to seek for Margaret; the power to do so had passed away with that moment of intense mental agony. It was too much for his simple nature; he had lost the object of his life, and with the loss, reason had fled forever.

As that boat went down, his companions raised the short, quick cry of men who are horrified. A moment's cry—a shout of terror. Is it echo?—that shrill, and rapid, but prolonged scream—that comes from yonder rock? The boatmen look at Olaf, and at each other, and speak not as they listen, Poor Olaf, he hears it not, or heeds it not; that fatuous and vacant stare of his, it hath no intelligence, no consciousness. And now their eyes follow in the direction of that unearthly screaming, and there, her head uncovered, her long black hair and wild skin dress floating like banners in the wind, wringing her hands with a passionate motion, stands 'Una.' And the boatmen are seized with a sudden awe, and marvel—'It is all her doing.' And some will have it she is the wood-demon, for no Norseman ever saw the water-demon; and some recognise her as a Lapland girl whose evil eye or wish has done it all.

How superstition wrongs our nature!—Poor, hapless, broken-hearted Una! She who had prayed so constantly to Nipen to make Olaf and Margaret happy. She too, who had beside her the presents, efforts of her needlework, to cast to Margaret as she passed. She who had come down, for she knew the day and watched the day, with a bleeding heart, but a heart full of gratitude, to see her benefactor and his bride upon the day that was to give them joy, though it brought worse than death to her. She who would have poured out her life for that young couple, was now regarded with a fearful awe by those simple boatmen, who, in their hearts charged her with it all. She knew it, and durst not come down—durst not speak to them. For a few moments longer there she stood, her scream responded to by the affrighted sea-birds it aroused from their resting places. The ripple died away—the storm passed as rapidly as it came—but that boat or its inmates was never given back to the surface. And as the boatmen knelt in prayer around the senseless Olaf, and over the young bride's watery grave, the Fin darted up the heights and disappeared from all eyes.

It was a strange destiny, though to a highly superstitious people easy explainable, that those three true hearts should perish thus—for perish is a word as applicable to the hearts of those that lived, as to her that died. Her's had ceased its warm palpitations, and slept beneath the ocean. One, the man's, still worked; but it urged the stream of life through the frame of a senseless idiot. And she who fled, she had life, and she had reason still, but her simple heart had broken. There is no literal truth in the expression, "broken heart"—but it is figuratively true of that state wherein grief has poured the full measure of her poison through the blood of life, and thenceforth all life-things are shadowy, all appetite for pleasure dies, and enjoyments pall, and are painful on the senses, which, though they still exist, but endure life.

Years after the sad event we have described, the lunatic asylum of Christiania gave refuge and protection to one, whose manly form and handsome features ill accorded with the vacant expression of a countenance, whose dim eyes fell meaningless upon all surrounding objects. He sat upon a low stool, and every now and then, his closed hands, as though grasping oars, went up and down with a uniform rowing motion—and, at times his breath came thick, and his motions became more rapid. He never spoke, unless when spoken to—and then the response was given to all questions, 'Hush, the storm is coming and we must be quick, or she goes down." But beyond this, he had no language, no mind, no thought. It would seem as if the event which drove poor reason from her citadel, effected its purpose just at the instant of time when one all-absorbing thought monopolised his whole mind. That one thought survived the wreck of intellect, but it was all that remained. And the superintendent who showed that institution, shook his head feelingly, as he regarded him, and said: 'For years he has never spoken but those words.' Beside that hopeless idiot tended a female, who, though dressed in Norwegian stuff, displayed features that seemed to have come from some other clime. Her dark hair and eyes, and sallow skin, and peculiar outline of feature, and delicately moulded frame, were not of Norwegian cast. She was evidently of foreign blood. But there was in her sad and gentle kindness a something more than that of a mere servant—this was evident even in the very tone of her voice, as she occasionally sought to quiet the tiresome motions of his frame, or, as a nurse tends a child, offered him some food. Her gentleness, her sadly sympathetic manner might have been that of a sister, but there was no blood, no resembling link between them. 'She tends him,' said the superintendent, 'like a sister or a daughter—she followed him here and became a servant without reward, in return for permission to be about him, and to feed him. She is of a bad race, no doubt—but she is all kindness to him; and one would not expect to find such nature in a poor Fin.'

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*Mallet, in his "Northern Antiquities," considers Fins and Laps as distinct; but these wandering and gipsy tribes appear to be called, in modern Norway, indifferently, Fin or Lap—See the Works of Inglis and Laring.

†"Nipen" is the demon-god, to whom the Norwegians make such propitiating offerings; he as the author of good and evil.

‡Blindness is sadly prevalent amongst the Laps and Fins.

§Sweet and richly seasoned cakes are left out at night, in Norway, for Nipen to eat.

‖Wedding feasts commence on Saturday—the ceremony on Sunday.

¶Early Norwegian History.

**Old Norway.

The Year's Decline.

BY JOHN SWAIN.

Come, and the year's decline behold;
O'er grove and green, and wood and wold,
Chased are the leaves by the wild winds cold.

Wasted and worn, away, away,
Vanish the graceful, fly the gay,
As before valor flies dismay.

Win ye who will, and when won, claim
This world's best good—wealth, pleasure, fame:
But hold—is there no nobler aim?

If not, then man is made to mourn;
And springs are but to mock us born;
And summers they but smile in scorn.

For pleasure—bright as blushing spring;
And fame—like songs wood warblers sing;
And riches fly like birds on wing.

But man was never made to mourn,
Never was spring to mock us born;
Never did summer smile in scorn.

They come that man may live—they go
That he may learn—may learn to know
His heart's best home is not below.

The blessed days that visit earth,
Awaking beauty, gladness, mirth,
Speak of the sky their place of birth.

For there's a better world than this,
Where the true good immortal is;
Else whence our light, and love, and bliss.

And now, amid the year's decline,
A thousand monitors combine,
To bid us seek the land divine.

Ennui.

Nine-tenths of the miseries and vices of mankind proceed from indolence and idleness. Persons who have naturally active minds, whose 'quick thoughts like lightning are alive,' are most perniciously affected by the evils of sloth. The favored sons of genius, endowed with great original powers, were not made for repose; indolence will quickly 'freeze the genial current of the soul,' and if left idle long they perish from inaction, like a scimitar corroded and destroyed by rust. But the active occupation of our faculties is a safeguard against three great evils, vice, penury, and desponding gloom. Says Colton, 'Ennui has made more gamblers than avarice, more drunkards than thirst, and more suicides than despair.' If we would be both useful and happy, we must keep ourselves industriously and virtuously employed. Old Dumbiedikes was wise in charging his son to 'be aye sticking in a tree when he had naething else to do.' Count de Caylus, a French nobleman, being born to wealth and princely idleness, turned his attention to engraving, and made many fine copies of antique gems. One of the nobility demanded from him a reason for this procedure, and was told by the industrious Count, 'I engrave, that I may not hang myself.'—*E. L. Magoon.*

Use not evasions when called upon to do a good action, nor excuses when you are reproached for doing a bad one.

No manner of speaking is so offensive as giving praise and closing it with an exception.

From the New Orleans Picayune.

The Lost Man.

A PRAIRIE SKETCH.

An unfortunate trader once strayed from his companions, and was lost four or five days, suffering the keenest pangs of starvation. It was years ago, yet the story has only been told in oral repetition among the old traders, and has never before, to our knowledge, fallen in the way of a scribe.

The man wandered away upon a sultry midsummer afternoon, oppressed to desperation with thirst, in search of water, while the caravan was dragging slowly along the dreary and heated prairie. Making his way to a cluster of timber that appeared no very tedious distance, he was fortunate enough to find a small cool spring gushing and rippling at the bottom of a deep rocky hollow. The fresh water, the cool shade of the steep rock, and the trees above, together with the knowledge that the wagons were still moving along in sight, induced the poor fellow to yield to his weariness, and suffer his eyes to close. When he awoke, the gray of evening was deepening around the prairie, and rushing up from the hollow, his eye wandered about in vain search of his companions. He was a raw adventurer, upon his first travel, knowing nothing of how to direct his steps in the wilderness, and trusting entirely to the guidance and experience of those with whom he traveled. Hasty, impulsive, and rash as he was careless, and without possessing a single quality of character to assist him in such an emergency, confused, terror at once took possession of him, and starting as he thought in the direction where he had last seen the wagons, he ran with headlong speed, shouting wildly at every step, in hopes of being heard and answered by his companions.

The terrified man, bereft of all thought by the fearful nature of his predicament, could not even remember to fire the rifle he held, but continued tearing his lungs with wild and desolate cries for assistance. While rushing blindly forward in this manner, the night still deepening around him, the man met with a violent fall and was stunned into insensibility for some hours.—We are giving now the substance of the poor fellow's own relation. He came back to consciousness some time during the night, in the midst of a pack of howling wolves, and found himself lying by the side of a buffalo's skeleton, not yet entirely stripped by the prowling dogs of the desert. A situation more appalling to heart and nerve, may not be imagined. The man doubted not but that he was aroused prematurely from his state of torpor by the hungry creatures assaulting his own body, for his clothes were mauled and torn, and the scratch of a claw was on his leg, though a tooth, it seems, had not yet touched him. He had tripped upon the skeleton, and struck his forehead on a horn or some other part, as he discovered a huge lump upon his head, which also ached distressingly when he came to his senses.

The poor fellow, in the heat of his terror, made out to scare away the wolves from himself, and escape from the spot, leaving the famished animals to return again to the buffalo's bones, and give them a cleaner polishing. Just escaping from one frightful danger, perhaps, took something from the keen horrors of his desolate, and wretched condition, but the unhappy man's sensations were harrowing and fearful in the extreme. He still pressed onward, his strength failing at every step, calling in harsh and broken shrieks to his friends, and changing his course again and again, in utter and miserable uncertainty of which way to turn.

Daylight came, the sun rose, noon approached and passed, and the lost man was alone in the desert, famished and faint, and without a solitary hope of regaining his companions, or finding the track they were pursuing.

That night the unhappy wretch sank exhausted upon the grass and slept, to awaken in a state of fear and danger more appalling even than the night before. A compact and innumerable band of buffaloes came moving slowly across the region of the prairie on which he lay, and he started from sleep in imminent peril of being trodden to death by the huge monarchs of the plain. As these dense masses of buffaloes move, they emit sounds that rise in the air like a sea surge, and as the vast black herd came toward him in deep midnight, the poor trader declared that a rolling ocean seemed about to overwhelm him. Utterly paralysed with his danger, the unfortunate man could but start to his feet, and stand confounded, fearing either to fire or use other means to alarm the buffaloes, lest by exciting their terror, he should but increase his own peril. From this critical position, however, he likewise escaped unhurt, for the animals separated, as is their custom, when a strange scent is detected, and passed on in two divisions, keeping some hundred yards clear of the mysterious intruder in the middle. Daylight was again appearing, as the last of this innumerable herd of creatures passed him, and the man was starving. He took aim with his rifle at a retreating buffalo, and missed fire, for his percussion cap was wet with the night dew. Still he was famishing, and his only hope seemed in the slaughtering of a buffalo. He followed, crawling on his hands and knees, and, after hours of weary watching and labor, wounded a cow at last with a successful shot, but the terrified creature limped away, and the whole band disappeared, while the poor trader fell prostrate, too exhausted and faint to make another effort in the pursuit.

The unhappy wretch lay groaning aloud, alone in the midst of an interminable waste, abandoned to desperation and despair, when the thin bark of a small prairie dog attracted his attention. Once more he charged his rifle, for the little creature was in sight, with its nose lifted just above the mound surrounding its hole. The starving man lay prostrate upon the earth, took slow and cautious aim at the dog, and was fortunate enough to knock it out of its hole with a broken back; but before he could reach the spot, the dying creature had wriggled back into his hiding place and disappeared. With his ten fingers, the desperate man raked up the earth, and succeeded in dragging the dying dog out upon the grass, where without waiting to finish his agony, he tore its warm flesh with his teeth, like a wolf, while the expiring creature was still biting at his fingers.

This unnatural sustenance restored the drooping man and he was enabled to resume his wanderings, which he continued for three more days and nights, alone, desolate and miserable, until he encountered a hunting party of Camanches, whom, so far from avoiding, he rushed to embrace, as though they were kindred near and dear, and the best friends, he could meet on earth. They were friends, as it turned out, for they set him upon the track to regain his comrades, with instructions to direct him, and buffalo meat to support him, paying themselves by stripping him of his rifle, and everything else of the slightest value he had about him.

After four days' travel the poor trader reached his friends again, and was welcomed as one from the grave. Upon the evening of his loss, search was made in all directions and signal guns fired which he would have heard, had he not been lying insensible by the buffalo's skeleton. Search was also continued upon the succeeding days, as the caravan moved along, but his wandering had been so irregular, tending in a far and opposite direction, that it was impossible to trace him. The five days suffering of this unfortunate man, may be but faintly imagined. Deserted and lost, without hope, in the interminable solitude, alone in a vast domain of sky and grass, famishing and tormented with raging thirst; O, terms may not be found of nervous force sufficient to thrill the natural sympathies, as should such a story as this, of 'The Lost Man.'

Nelson's Playful Decision.

Lord Nelson's manner, apart from duty, was universally kind and even playful to all around him; an amusing instance of which, as well as of his extreme quickness, occurred during this cruise in the Mediterranean. One bright morning, when the ship was moving about four knots an hour through a very smooth sea, everything on board being orderly and quiet, there was a sudden cry of "a man overboard!" A midshipman named Flinn, a good draughtsman, who had been sitting on deck comfortably sketching, started at the cry, and looking over the side of the ship, saw his own servant, who was no swimmer, floundering in the sea. Before Flinn's jacket could be off, the captain of marines had thrown the man a chair through the port-hole in the ward-room, to keep him floating, and the next instant Flinn had flung himself overboard, and was swimming to the rescue. The admiral, having witnessed the whole affair from the quarter-deck, was highly delighted with the scene; and when the party, chair and all, had been hauled upon deck, he called Mr. Flinn, praised his conduct and made him lieutenant on the spot. A loud huzza from the midshipmen, whom the incident had collected on deck, and who were throwing up their hats in honor of Flinn's good fortune, arrested Lord Nelson's attention. There was something significant in the tone of their cheer which he immediately recognised; and putting up his hand for silence, and leaning over to the crowd of middies, he said with a good natured smile on his face, "Stop, young gentlemen. Mr. Flinn has done a gallant thing to-day—and he has done many gallant things before—for which he has got his reward; but mind, I'll have no more making lieutenants for servants falling overboard."—*Memoir of Dr. Scott, Nelson's Chaplain.*

Chinese Etiquette.

The Chinese are so punctilious that their code of etiquette outvies the most ceremonious courts in Europe. As soon as a guest alights from his sedan chair, he is met by the host, who bows his head, bends his body and his knees, joins both hands in front, and with them knocks his chest. When he wishes to be very polite, he takes his guest's hand with his and knocks it upon his chest. This is their mode of shaking hands. Now follows a polite contest as to precedence, which, after various knockings, bowings, and genuflections, terminates by the host and guest entering the house together. At the sitting apartment another ceremony takes place, equally protracted and irksome. The point to be determined is where each shall sit, and who shall be seated first. Etiquette extends even to a decision of the size of a chair, by which invariably the rank or importance of a guest is determined. The host now motions to a large chair and attempts to take a smaller one himself. Good breeding compels the guest, in turn, to refuse this compliment; and after a wearying contest of politeness, the point is amicably adjusted to the satisfaction of the belligerents, either by both parties sitting down simultaneously on the same bench, or upon two chairs of equal dimensions. The fatigue of this courtesy may be easily conceived, as the same routine is performed on the arrival of each guest. As soon as the guests are assembled, tea is handed round in covered cups, which are placed in silver stands in the form of a boat. These are fluted and beautifully chased. The cups on the occasion to which I refer were of that antique porcelain so exceedingly valued, which is as thin as paper, pure white, perfectly transparent, and is ornamented with obscure figures, whose dark outlines are only perceptible when the vessel is filled with tea. The mode of making tea in China is similar to that in which coffee is made in Turkey. The tea is put into a cup, boiling water poured over it, and instantly covered, to prevent the escape of the aroma, with a lid, which is used as a spoon to sip the tea. They never use sugar or milk with tea in China.—*Dublin University Magazine.*

The Invincible Champion.

Providence has clearly ordained, that the only path fit and salutary for man on earth, is the path for persevering fortitude—the unremitting struggle of deliberate self-preparation and humble but active reliance on divine aid. Such persons are the elect spirits, chosen to glorify God in serving mankind; they are the luminous expounders of heavenly designs, the predestined torch-bearers who transmit primitive wisdom and cheering promise from the beginning to the consummation of the world. Their sublime course here below was symbolised by what the observant child saw when he inquired,

What is that, mother?
The eagle, my boy,
Proudly careering his course of joy,
Firm, on his own mountain vigor relying:
Breasting the dark storm; the red bolt defying;
His wing on the wind, and his eye on the sun,
He swerves not a hair, but bears onward, right on.
Boy, may the eagle's flight ever be thine;
Onward, and upward, and true to the line.

It is not the magnitude of the Grecian army, nor the martial skill of Achilles their leader, that conquered the great city of Troy, but the ten years of their perseverance. As Christians, we have fiercer foes to fight, and nobler conquests to win, than had the armies of pagan nations. Let us remember the moral laws under which we live, and learn to use means as well as exercise faith. He who kneels in his field to pray, without weeding it; and he who assumes the attitude of devotion in his boat, without pulling the oar, will neither deserve nor receive the fulness of the divine blessing. Our hands must toil while our supplications ascend, if we hope to be heard with acceptance. Caratch, in Fletcher's Bonduca, when admonished to inquire into the mind of the god Andate, replies,

"His hidden meaning lies in our endeavors.
Our valors are our best gods.'"

[*E. L. Magoon.*

A word spoken pleasantly is a large spot of sunshine on a sad heart.

Plato often inculcates this great precept 'Do thine own work, and know thyself.'

Look for great things, expect great things, and WORK for great things, and great things will surely be accomplished.